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ABSTRACT

During 1999, the school choice movement succeeded in winning the enactment of an education tax credit program in Illinois and two new charter school laws, in addition to the sweeping (although subsequently overturned) school choice plan in Florida. Pennsylvania, New Mexico, and Texas also attempted to enact school choice legislation. In addition, a survey found that 1.25 million low-income parents would take advantage of scholarships to attend a better private or religious school if given a choice. None of the lawsuits against school choice was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, although many are pending. Public opinion shows continued interest in school choice, especially at the grass-roots level among African Americans, but the development that could significantly affect the future of the movement is the presidential election. Research has shown that school choice works, but many challenges lie ahead for the supporters of school choice. Two charts show governor support of school vouchers and school choice and charter school programs at a glance. (SLD)

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SCHOOL CHOICE 2000 ANNUAL REPORT
The Heritage Foundation Backgrounder No. 1354
March 30, 2000

Nina Shokraii Rees

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Backgrounder

No. 1354 March 30, 2000

SCHOOL CHOICE 2000 ANNUAL REPORT

NINA SHOKRAII REES

"If you're in an...under-achieving school, then you have a right to seek a voucher to go to a school where you can be guaranteed some level of achievement."

—Andrew Young, former mayor of Atlanta and top aide to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Despite an adverse ruling by a Florida state judge on March 14, 2000, striking down that state's eight-month-old school choice law, the school choice movement began the new millennium on a high note. During 1999, it succeeded in winning the enactment of an education tax credit program in Illinois and two new charter school laws, in addition to Florida's sweeping (albeit subsequently overturned) school choice plan. Pennsylvania, New Mexico, and Texas also were in the school choice spotlight, although efforts to enact legislation in these states were not successful.

Perhaps most impressive, the Children's Scholarship Fund found that 1.25 million low-income parents would take advantage of scholarships to attend a better private or religious school if given a choice.

In the waning hours of the 1999 legislative session, the legislatures of Oklahoma and Oregon passed two fairly strong bipartisan charter school measures that later were signed into law. And the U.S. Department of Education released results of its ongoing study of charter schools, showing (among other things) that these schools educate a higher portion of minority students than do the public schools.

Despite a topsy-turvy year, none of the lawsuits against school choice was upheld by the Supreme Court, though many are still pending.

The court of public opinion, however, continues to show growing support for school choice, especially among minorities. The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a leading black think tank, found in its 1999 annual poll that support for choice among blacks is at an all-time high: 60 percent. This includes two-thirds of black baby boomers and over 70 percent of blacks under 35.[1]

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1. See Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies Web site at *http://www.jointcenter.org/selpaper/poll_edu99.htm*.

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Though still in its infancy, the body of research on school choice is beginning to show strong evidence that choice works. Perhaps the most promising development in school choice research is a new book by John Witte, the official evaluator of the Milwaukee school choice program. Witte's previous reports have been used to show that school choice does not work; but in *The Market Approach to Education: An Analysis of America's First Voucher Program*, he concludes that choice is a "useful tool to aid low-income families."[2]

Michigan and California are up next: Choice initiatives are on each state's ballot this November. Also, at least two governors have pledged to push for school choice in the coming years. Governor Gary Johnson of New Mexico plans to offer all students a voucher to attend a school of choice, and Governor John Rowland of Connecticut wants to offer the parents of private and religious school students a $500 tax credit. Legislatures in at least 20 states are considering some form of voucher or tax credit legislation.

Regardless of what happens at the state level, however, one development could significantly alter the course of school choice in 2000: the presidential elections. The next President will decide the composition of the U.S. Supreme Court and determine who fills the vacancies on the lower federal courts. Most legal scholars expect that the Supreme Court could decide, once and for all, the constitutionality of school choice in the near future.

GROWTH OF PUBLICLY FINANCED PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE

Two states led the way in school reform during 1999: Florida and Illinois. In part because of leadership from Governor Jeb Bush and allies like T. Willard Fair of the Urban League of Greater Miami, Florida is now the first state to allow a "money back guarantee" for students trapped in failing schools.

Florida's statewide school choice plan allows students who have been trapped for two out of four years in a failing school an opportunity to attend a better public, private, or religious school of choice. In the first year (1999–2000), 134 families from two elementary schools in Pensacola were offered scholarships, of which 78 were for attendance at public schools. Students in as many as 50 schools could qualify in 2000–2001.

Faced with the prospect of a mass exodus from poorly performing public schools, public school officials have been quick to respond. The Superintendent of the Hillsborough County School District in Tampa even said that he and all of his top administrators would take a 5 percent pay cut if any of the schools in Hillsborough County were given a grade of "F." The leaders of the teachers unions and their allies, as expected, immediately filed two lawsuits against the Florida plan. A state judge struck down the law on March 14, 2000, although the students in the program will be allowed to stay in their private school of choice until the end of the school year.

In Illinois, the legislature enacted an educational expenses tax credit that would provide parents a tax credit of up to 25 percent of education-related expenses—tuition, book fees, lab fees—exceeding $250, for a maximum of $500 per family. The Illinois program has been challenged in two separate lawsuits even though its key beneficiaries are public school students.

Other states have taken positive action as well.

- **In New Mexico,** a bill backed by Governor Gary Johnson to award each of the state's 316,000 schoolchildren a voucher worth $3,500 a year gained momentum; after being scaled back, however, it was defeated.
- **In Pennsylvania,** Governor Tom Ridge introduced a plan that would offer, among other things, a voucher to parents in struggling districts to send their children to the public, private, or religious school of choice. This plan

2. Joe Williams, "Ex-Milwaukee Evaluator Endorses School Choice," *The Sunday Journal Sentinel*, January 9, 2000, p. 1.

NOTE: Nothing written here is to be construed as necessarily reflecting the views of The Heritage Foundation or as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any bill before Congress.

also was scaled back, after which it was withdrawn from consideration.

- **In Texas,** several bills were introduced with the backing of both Governor George Bush and Lieutenant Governor Rick Perry, but none was passed by the legislature.

Governors Johnson, Ridge, and Bush and Lieutenant Governor Perry all have vowed to continue to push for these reforms in the future.

CHARTER SCHOOLS ON THE RISE

Toward the end of the 1999 legislative session, the legislatures of Oklahoma and Oregon passed two fairly strong bipartisan charter school measures that later were signed into law.

Meanwhile, for the third year in a row, Hugh Price, president of the National Urban League, has implored his members to think like real reformers, urging that all the nation's urban schools be turned into independently run charter schools.[3]

In February 2000, the U.S. Department of Education released *The State of Charter Schools—2000*, the fourth-year report of a national study of charter schools.[4] The report finds that:

- During 1999, 421 new charter schools opened, bringing the total to 1,484 as of September. (If multiple branches of a school operating under the same charter are taken into account, the total number of charter school sites operating was 1,605.)
- During the 1998–1999 school year, the number of students in charter schools increased by nearly 90,000, bringing the total to more than 250,000 students.
- Of the 36 states with charter laws, 11 allow private schools to convert to charter schools.
- Most charter schools are small, with an average enrollment of 137 students.
- White students made up about 48 percent of charter school enrollment in 1998 compared to about 59 percent of public school enrollment in 1997–1998.

Another report, by Professor Scott Milliman of James Madison University, Fredrick Hess and Robert Maranto of the University of Virginia, and Charlottesville, Virginia, social psychologist April Gresham, reveals that the establishment of charter schools has spurred noticeable differences in the public school system.[5] Based on a March 1998 survey of Arizona public school teachers, the researchers concluded that the power of choice and market competition from charter schools led to the following changes between the 1994–1995 and 1997–1998 school years:

- Districts made greater attempts to inform parents about school programs and options.
- Districts placed greater emphasis on promoting professional development for teachers.
- School principals increased consultation with teaching staff.

The authors also found that charter schools do not replace district schools, but rather push district schools to compete, primarily because state subsidies follow the students.

GROWTH OF THE PRIVATE SCHOLARSHIP MOVEMENT

Perhaps the most interesting and encouraging phenomenon in education reform during the past decade has been the creation of the Children's Scholarship Fund. The CSF is a $100 million foundation underwritten by entrepreneurs Ted Forstmann and John Walton. The plan initially

3. Center for Education Reform, *Monthly Letter to Friends*, No. 59, January 2000.
4. See U.S. Department of Education Web site at *http://www.ed.gov/pubs/charter4thyear/*.
5. Scott Milliman, Fredrick Hess, Robert Maranto, and April Gresham, "Do Charter Schools Improve District Schools? Three Approaches to the Question", in Maranto, Milliman, Hess, and Gresham, eds., *School Choice in the Real World: Lessons from Arizona Charter Schools* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999), pp. 129–141.

offered 43 cities and three states matching funds to allow poor students trapped in failing schools an opportunity to attend a school of choice. Later, because of an overwhelming number of applications for CSF challenge grants, the program expanded to offer vouchers to all low-income students entering kindergarten through 8th grade, not just those in the 43 cities and three states originally selected as partners.

By the March 31, 1999, deadline for applications, the CSF had received responses from all 50 states—from 22,000 communities and 90 percent of all counties across America. In some cities, a remarkable percentage of the eligible population applied: 29 percent in New York; 33 percent in Washington, D.C.; and a stunning 44 percent in Baltimore.

In all, the CSF received a total of 1,250,000 applications—*30 times the number of scholarships available*. This response is even more remarkable because to qualify for these partial scholarships, applicants must be from low-income families willing to contribute an average of $1,000 per year. This $1,000-per-year contribution for four years from parents of 1.25 million children adds up to $5 billion from families who have very little to give. These parents are willing to sacrifice in order to give their children the chance to escape bad schools and, through choice, gain access to greater educational opportunities.

Altogether, the CSF has awarded nearly 40,000 four-year partial scholarships, totaling $170 million, to enable thousands of low-income students across the country to attend a school of choice. Recipients are selected randomly by computer-generated lottery.

The CSF board includes civil rights leaders like Andrew Young, Martin Luther King III, and Dorothy Height, and such national leaders as General Colin Powell, Barbara Bush, and the majority and minority leaders of the U.S. Senate—Trent Lott (R–MS) and Thomas Daschle (D–SD). Other members include baseball legend Sammy Sosa and actor Will Smith; Disney president Michael Ovitz, Black Entertainment Television founder Robert Johnson, and MTV president Tom Freston; and prominent business leaders like news magnate Rupert Murdoch and America Online founder Jim Kimsey.

Although school choice is strongly opposed by the leadership of the teachers unions, the idea is clearly winning the hearts and minds of many Americans on all sides of the political spectrum, particularly those who want all children to get the best education available.

A TOPSY-TURVY YEAR IN THE COURTS

A Florida state judge struck down the state's eight-month-old school choice program on March 14, 2000, but this setback is a minor one compared to the positive legal developments on the school choice front during the past year.

Although a May 1999 ruling by the Ohio Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Cleveland scholarship program, the court also ruled that the program violated the state constitution's single-subject rule because it had been attached to the state's biennial budget. The court stayed the effect of its ruling until June 30 to allow the legislature time to reenact the program in a proper manner.

The legislature complied, and Governor Robert Taft signed the bill into law. Shortly thereafter, however, the same parties that had filed the first lawsuit against the program filed another suit. They repeated their claim that the program violated the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution and asked the court to issue a preliminary injunction that would halt the program before the start of the school year.[6]

One day before the Cleveland public schools opened in August 1999, Judge Solomon Oliver granted the plaintiffs' request for a preliminary injunction. Three days later, in reaction to the nationwide outcry over his decision displacing 3,800 students, Judge Oliver modified his order,

6. Clint Bolick, *School Choice Litigation Status* as of January 21, 2000, e-mail correspondence from Institute for Justice.

allowing students who had participated in the program last year to continue in the program for one semester while the litigation proceeded. In early November, the U.S. Supreme Court stayed the preliminary injunction, allowing the program to resume operation in its entirety.

Then, in December 1999, Judge Oliver ruled that the program violated the First Amendment's Establishment Clause. He stayed the injunction, however, pending appellate review. An appeal has been filed, and the Ohio Supreme Court should consider this appeal sometime this spring. At present, the Ohio case is considered the best candidate for review by the U.S. Supreme Court.[7]

The U.S. Supreme Court declined to take up the question of whether the Vermont and Maine Supreme Courts' decisions to exclude religious schools in those states' tuitioning programs violated parents' First Amendment rights under the Free Exercise Clause. The two states currently provide private and public school tuition for children in rural school districts that do not have their own public schools.[8]

On a more positive note, the Supreme Court also declined to review an Arizona Supreme Court decision to allow a $500 tax credit to individuals who contribute money to private scholarship organizations. As a result, the legal status of the Arizona tax credit is now settled.[9]

SCHOOL CHOICE WORKS: WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

Social science researchers offered several promising findings for school choice last year.

- A study released in September 1999 by Dr. Kim Metcalf of Indiana University found that Cleveland scholarship students show a small but statistically significant improvement in achievement scores in language and science. The researchers found that the program effectively serves the population of families and children for which it was intended and developed, and that the majority of the children who participate in the program were not likely to have enrolled in a private school without a scholarship. The study also found that scholarship parents' perceptions of and satisfaction with their children's schools were substantially improved.[10]

- Similarly, a June 1999 survey conducted by Professor Paul Peterson of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government reveals that parents participating in Cleveland's voucher program are more satisfied with many aspects of the schools they chose than are parents with children still in public schools.[11] A study released by the Columbus, Ohio-based Buckeye Institute argues that school choice in Cleveland also has provided better racial integration than the Cleveland public school system.[12]

- In March, the Children's Educational Opportunities Foundation (CEO America) released its findings on San Antonio's Horizon program, the nation's first fully funded private voucher program offered to all parents in an entire district. The study, also conducted by Harvard's Paul Peterson, found that the program did not lead to an exodus from the public schools: Only 800 students left the public schools,

7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. Dr. Kim K. Metcalf, "Evaluation of the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Grant Program, 1996–99," Indiana Center for Evaluation, Indiana University, September 1999.
11. See John F. Kennedy School of Government Web site at *http://data.fas.harvard.edu/PEPG/*
12. Jay Greene, Ph.D., "The Racial, Economic, and Religious Context of Parental Choice in Cleveland," Buckeye Institute, November 17, 1999.

reducing the district's budget by only 3.5 percent. However, after the inception of the Horizon program, the Edgewood Independent School District implemented an inter-district choice program which allowed 200 students from other districts to transfer to Edgewood Schools, bringing with them $775,000 that otherwise would have gone to their home districts.

In addition, nearly every scholarship applicant was accepted at a school of choice, thus refuting arguments that private schools would "cherry pick" the best students. In September 1999, Peterson concluded that the program does not "cream" the best students out of the public school system. The multiyear study found that there was no significant academic or economic difference between the students who entered the Horizon program and those who remained in the public school system.[13]

Perhaps the most promising development in school choice research, however, is a new book by the official evaluator of the Milwaukee school choice program, John Witte. Witte's previous reports have been used to show that school choice does not work; but in *The Market Approach to Education: An Analysis of America's First Voucher Program*, released early in 2000, he finds choice to be a "useful tool to aid low-income families."[14]

Similarly, a report released early in 2000 by Wisconsin's Legislative Audit Bureau finds that despite fears of "creaming" and segregation, school choice is serving a student population identical to that of the Milwaukee public school system. The report also finds that most of the schools participating in the Milwaukee parental choice program provide high-quality academic programs and tests.[15]

And to the pleasant surprise of many school reformers, the National Research Council (NRC) has proposed a "large and ambitious" school choice research experiment to determine whether the program might benefit students. The NRC, a federally financed arm of the National Academy of Sciences, has called for a multi-district, 10-year voucher experiment.[16]

WINNING IN THE COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION

Choice continues to gain acceptance among some of the nation's most prominent African–American leaders, such as former Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young, once a prominent aide to Martin Luther King, Jr., and former Colorado NAACP President Willie Breazell, who was asked to leave his post recently after publicly voicing his support for school choice. Breaking with the educational establishment and its allies can be costly.

However, the most powerful support for the school choice movement among African–Americans is found at the grass roots, particularly among African–American parents. In its 1999 annual poll, for example, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies found that support for choice among blacks is at an all-time high: 60 percent. This includes two-thirds of black baby boomers and over 70 percent of blacks under 35.[17]

Support is growing among educators as well. An annual poll by Phi Delta Kappa, a professional association of educators, recently revealed that support for vouchers rose from 45 percent in 1994 to 51 percent this past year.[18] Similarly, among parents of public school students, the number has risen from 51 percent in 1994 to 60 percent today.

13. See John F. Kennedy School of Government Web site at *http://data.fas.harvard.edu/PEPG/*.

14. Williams, "Ex-Milwaukee Evaluator Endorses School Choice."

15. See Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau Web site at *www.legis.state.wi.us/lab/windex.htm*.

16. Kerry A. White, "NRC Report Calls for Voucher Experiment," *Education Week*, September 15, 1999.

17. See Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies Web site at *http://www.jointcenter.org/selpaper/poll_edu99.htm*.

18. See Phi Delta Kappa Web site at *http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kpol9909.htm*.

Nevertheless, confusion about school choice and what it can do for children's education also abounds. For example, in spite of the widespread debate on the issue, a recent report by Public Agenda, a public opinion research organization, found that 60 percent of parents in Milwaukee and Cleveland either know very little or nothing about school choice programs.[19]

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

The three states to watch during the coming year are Connecticut, Michigan, and California.

- **In Connecticut,** Governor John Rowland has called for a $500 tax break for parents with children in private and religious schools. "School choice increases competition and raises expectations," Governor Rowland said in his February 9 state of the state address.[20]
- **In Michigan,** school choice advocates have collected the 302,711 signatures required by the state to place a school choice initiative on this November's ballot.[21] The proposed constitutional amendment would repeal a prohibition against K–12 vouchers and tuition tax credits while leaving in place a ban against direct aid to non-public schools. It also would award children in the state's worst-performing school districts a $3,100 "opportunity scholarship" to help them transfer to private schools. Philanthropist Richard DeVos and leaders of Detroit's black community have assumed leadership roles in the campaign for this initiative, called "Kids First! Yes!"
- **In California,** Tim Draper, a Silicon Valley venture capitalist and former Republican-appointed member of the state board of education, is promoting another initiative for this fall. The initiative would amend the state constitution, setting funding for support of public schools at a "national average dollar per pupil funding amount" and providing a scholarship of $4,000 to parents who wish to enroll their children in non-public schools. For parents with children already in private schools, the full scholarship amount would be phased in over three years.[22]

In addition, Congress likely will resurrect a school choice plan for the District of Columbia. Proposed by House Majority Leader Richard Armey (R–TX) and Senator Sam Brownback (R–KS), the plan would provide scholarships to D.C.'s poorest students to attend a public, private, or religious school of choice in D.C. and its suburbs.

In addition, a plan by Senator Paul Coverdell (R–GA) to expand existing education savings accounts for higher education to students in grades K–12 has been passed by the Senate and is being considered by the House. And Senator Judd Gregg (R–NH) has won the approval of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions for a plan that would allow funding under Title I (a federal program designed to close the achievement gap between rich and poor students) to follow poor students to a public or private provider of choice such as, for example, the Sylvan Learning Centers.

In New Mexico, Governor Gary Johnson declared in his recent state of the state address that "What is missing from public education is not money; what is missing is competition and choice. I call on you to support the heart and soul of real educational reform, which is school vouchers." Governor Johnson believes the 2000 elections in his state will bring in a crop of pro-voucher legislators, making it easier for him to pass school choice in 2001.

Finally, conservative lawmakers and minority activists in Colorado plan to promote a Milwaukee-style pilot program for Denver during the

19. See Public Agenda Web site at *http://www.publicagenda.org/*.

20. Jeff Archer, "Rowland Proposing Tuition Tax Credits for Connecticut," *Education Week*, February 16, 2000.

21. In fact, they collected many more signatures than required: a total of some 408,000.

22. See Draper Initiative Web site at *www.localchoice.com*.

2001 legislative session. Other states to watch in 2001 are Texas and Virginia.

CONCLUSION

With the introduction of the first statewide "money back guarantee" program in Florida and the rising demand for private scholarship programs offered by groups like the Children's Scholarship Fund, the entrenched opposition to school choice is not only losing in the court of public opinion, but also slowly losing its bureaucratic stranglehold over the nation's schools and students.

School choice advocates continue to gain support from thoughtful leaders on the left and in the civil rights community while powerful special interests, led by the leaders of the teachers unions and groups like People for the American Way (PAW), continue to fight the parents of poor students who want a better education for their children. PAW's leaders, for example, rejoiced over a federal judge's ruling in Ohio that prevented poor students from attending a school of choice three days before the start of the new school year.

But the evidence shows that the education establishment and its political allies are now playing defense. The new millennium is sure to bring more victories, and 2000 will be a pivotal year for the school choice movement.

—Nina Shokraii Rees is Senior Education Analyst at The Heritage Foundation.

Governor Support of School Vouchers and Composition of State Legislatures

			Legislative Majority Party	
	Governor	Pro Voucher?	House	Senate
Alabama	Don Siegelman (D)	No	Democrat	Democrat
Alaska	Tony Knowles (D)	No	Republican	Republican
Arizona	**Jane Dee Hull (R)**	**Yes**	**Republican**	**Republican**
Arkansas	Mike Huckabee (R)	"Skeptical"	Democrat	Democrat
California	Gray Davis (D)	No	Democrat	Democrat
Colorado	Bill Owens (R)	Yes	Republican	Republican
Connecticut	John Rowland (R)	Yes	Democrat	Democrat
Delaware	Thomas Carper (D)	No	Republican	Democrat
District of Columbia	Mayor Anthony Williams (D)	No	N/A	N/A
Florida	**Jeb Bush (R)**	**Yes**	**Republican**	**Republican**
Georgia	Roy Barnes (D)	Possible yes	Democrat	Democrat
Hawaii	Ben Cayetano (D)	No	Democrat	Democrat
Idaho	Dirk Kempthorne (R)	Possible yes	Republican	Republican
Illinois	**George Ryan (R)**	**Possible yes**	**Democrat**	**Republican**
Indiana	Frank O'Bannon (D)	No	Democrat	Republican
Iowa	**Tom Vilsack (D)**	**No**	**Republican**	**Republican**
Kansas	Bill Graves (R)	No position	Republican	Republican
Kentucky	Paul Patton (D)	No position	Democrat	Republican
Louisiana	Mike Foster (D)	No position	Democrat	Democrat
Maine	**Angus King, Jr. (I)**	**No**	**Democrat**	**Democrat**
Maryland	Parris Glendening (D)	No	Democrat	Democrat
Massachusetts	A. Paul Cellucci (R)	Possible yes	Democrat	Democrat
Michigan	John Engler (R)	Yes, qualified	Republican	Republican
Minnesota	**Jesse Ventura (I)**	**No**	**Republican**	**Democrat**
Mississippi	Ronnie Musgrove (D)	No	Democrat	Democrat
Missouri	Mel Carnahan (D)	No	Democrat	Democrat
Montana	Marc Racicot (R)	No interest	Republican	Republican
Nebraska	Mike Johanns (R)	Yes	Unicameral, nonpartisan legislature	
Nevada	Kenny Guinn (R)	Yes, qualified	Democrat	Republican
New Hampshire	Jeanne Shaheen (D)	No	Republican	Democrat
New Jersey	Christine Whitman (R)	Yes, qualified	Republican	Republican
New Mexico	Gary Johnson (R)	Yes	Democrat	Democrat
New York	George Pataki (R)	Possible yes	Democrat	Republican
North Carolina	James Hunt, Jr. (D)	No	Democrat	Democrat
North Dakota	Edward Schafer (R)	No	Republican	Republican
Ohio	**Robert Taft (R)**	**Yes**	**Republican**	**Republican**
Oklahoma	Frank Keating (R)	Yes	Democrat	Democrat
Oregon	John Kitzhaber (D)	No	Republican	Republican
Pennsylvania	Tom Ridge (R)	Yes	Republican	Republican
Rhode Island	Lincoln Almond (R)	Yes	Democrat	Democrat
South Carolina	Jim Hodges (D)	No	Republican	Democrat
South Dakota	William Janklow (R)	No position	Republican	Republican
Tennessee	Don Sundquist (R)	No position	Democrat	Democrat
Texas	George W. Bush (R)	Yes	Democrat	Republican
Utah	Michael Leavitt (R)	No	Republican	Republican
Vermont	**Howard Dean (D)**	**No**	**Democrat**	**Democrat**
Virginia	James Gilmore (R)	Yes	Republican	Republican
Washington	Gary Locke (D)	No	Tie	Democrat
West Virginia	Cecil Underwood (R)	No position	Democrat	Democrat
Wisconsin	**Tommy Thompson (R)**	**Yes**	**Republican**	**Democrat**
Wyoming	Jim Geringer (R)	No interest	Republican	Republican

Note: Highlighted states currently have a publicly funded private school choice program.
Sources: The Heritage Foundation and the American Education Reform Foundation.

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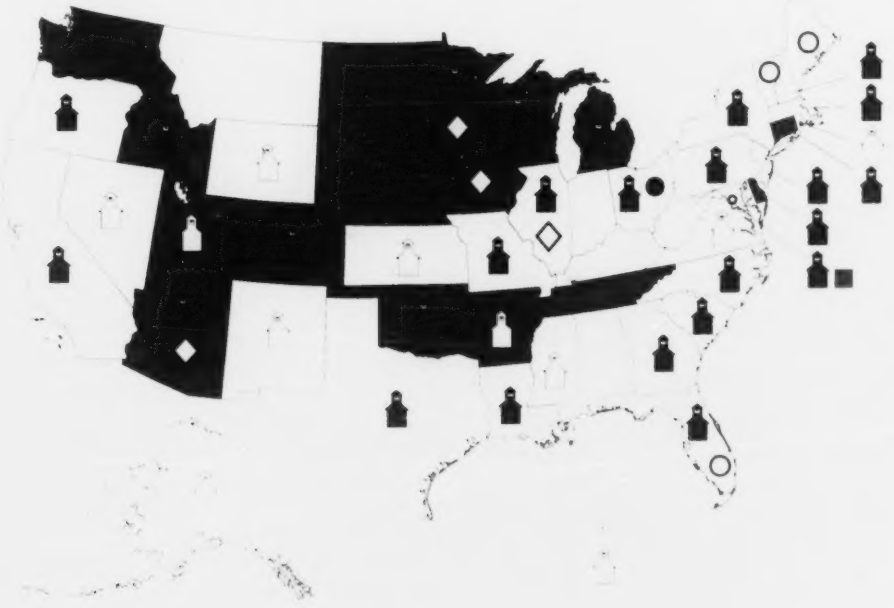
School Choice and Charter School Programs at a Glance

	Public School Choice	Charter Schools	Vouchers	Tax Credits and/or Deductions
Alabama	Limited	N/A	N/A	N/A
Alaska	N/A	Weak	N/A	N/A
Arizona	Statewide	Strong	N/A	Tax credits
Arkansas	Statewide	Weak	N/A	N/A
California	Limited	Strong	N/A	N/A
Colorado	Statewide	Strong	N/A	N/A
Connecticut	Statewide	Strong	N/A	N/A
Delaware	Statewide	Strong	N/A	N/A
District of Columbia	Citywide	Strong	N/A	N/A
Florida	Limited	Strong	Statewide for students in failing schools*	N/A
Georgia	N/A	Strong	N/A	N/A
Hawaii	N/A	Weak	N/A	N/A
Idaho	Statewide	Strong	N/A	N/A
Illinois	N/A	Strong	N/A	Tax credits
Indiana	Limited	N/A	N/A	N/A
Iowa	Statewide	N/A	N/A	Tax credits
Kansas	N/A	Weak	N/A	N/A
Kentucky	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Louisiana	Limited	Strong	N/A	N/A
Maine	Limited	N/A	Statewide/does not include religious schools	N/A
Maryland	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Massachusetts	Limited	Strong	N/A	N/A
Michigan	Statewide	Strong	N/A	N/A
Minnesota	Statewide	Strong	N/A	Tax credits and deductions
Mississippi	Limited	Weak	N/A	N/A
Missouri	Limited	Strong	N/A	N/A
Montana	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nebraska	Statewide	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nevada	Limited	Weak	N/A	N/A
New Hampshire	Limited	Strong	N/A	N/A
New Jersey	Limited	Strong	N/A	N/A
New Mexico	Limited	Weak	N/A	N/A
New York	Limited	Strong	N/A	N/A
North Carolina	N/A	Strong	N/A	N/A
North Dakota	Statewide	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ohio	Limited	Strong	Means-tested pilot for Cleveland*	N/A
Oklahoma	Statewide	Strong	N/A	N/A
Oregon	Limited	Strong	N/A	N/A
Pennsylvania	N/A	Strong	N/A	N/A
Rhode Island	N/A	Weak	N/A	N/A
South Carolina	N/A	Strong	N/A	N/A
South Dakota	Statewide	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tennessee	Statewide	N/A	N/A	N/A
Texas	Limited	Strong	N/A	N/A
Utah	Statewide	Weak	N/A	N/A
Vermont	N/A	N/A	Statewide/does not include religious schools	N/A
Virginia	N/A	Weak	N/A	N/A
Washington	Statewide	N/A	N/A	N/A
West Virginia	Limited	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wisconsin	Statewide	Strong	Means-tested pilot for Milwaukee	N/A
Wyoming	Limited	Weak	N/A	N/A

Note: The Ohio and Florida voucher programs have been struck down. They are both on appeal. The Florida program will continue until the end of the 1999–2000 school year and the Ohio plan will continue until an appellate ruling.
Sources: The Heritage Foundation, the Center for Education Reform, and the Education Commission of the States

School Choice and Charter School Programs: 2000



- Public School Choice Statewide (18)
- Public School Choice Limited to Some or All Districts (19)
- Medium to Strong Charter School Laws (26)
- Weak Charter School Laws (11)
- Cities with Publicly Sponsored Full School Choice (2)
- States with Publicly Sponsored Full School Choice (3)
- States with Education Tax Deductions or Credits (4)

Note: Information is current as of March 15, 2000. In Maine and Vermont, publicly sponsored full school choice is limited to non-religious private schools.
Sources: The Heritage Foundation, the Center for Education Reform, and the Education Commission of the States.

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